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*Testimony of Representative Gerald Fox, III of Stamford
Before the Public Safety and Security Committee on House Bill 5394, An Act Concerning Smoke and
Carbon Monoxide Detectors and Alarms in Residential Buildings*

Senator Hartley, Representative Dargan and members of the Public Safety and Security Committee. For the record, my name is State Representative Gerald Fox, III. I would like to thank the committee for raising H.B. 5394, AN ACT CONCERNING SMOKE AND CARBON MONOXIDE DETECTORS AND ALARMS IN RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS.

It has long been recognized that properly installed and maintained smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors save lives. Smoke alarms are designed to detect and warn the occupants of otherwise undetectable smoke in the air. Carbon monoxide is invisible and odorless, but is one of the most toxic substances and leading causes of accidental poisoning. Whether we are asleep or awake, a working detector is constantly scanning the air for smoke and carbon monoxide. The smoke and carbon monoxide detectors are invaluable because they give people a chance to get out of their homes before it is too late.

In 2005, the General Assembly recognized that detectors promote safety of the people of our state by passing P.A. 05-161. The 2005 Public Act required that carbon monoxide detectors and warning equipment be installed in new residential buildings, but excepted private dwellings occupied by one or two families.

H.B. 5394 strengthens and builds upon the 2005 legislation. If passed, it would amend section 29-292 of the general statutes to require that all residential buildings comply with the Fire Safety Code, and that smoke and carbon monoxide detectors and warning equipment be installed in all residential buildings, regardless of the number of families that can occupy the home.

The importance of effective preventative measures against fire and carbon monoxide in our homes is clear and we have covered many properties with the 2005 legislation. Now is the time to establish the public policy that all dwellings occupied for residential purposes in our state be required to have smoke and carbon monoxide detectors. This will bring additional awareness of the importance of smoke and carbon monoxide detectors and provide warning so people can vacate their homes when faced with dangerous conditions.

I thank the committee for raising this important legislation and your continued efforts to advance public safety. Thank you for the opportunity to present my testimony and I urge the committee's favorable report.